

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1 (Currently amended). An apparatus, comprising:

an expandable member being sized to be positionable in a sphincter, the expandable member having a deployed state and a nondeployed state, the deployed state sized for applying sufficient force to the sphincter to dilate the sphincter at least 5 mm;

an energy delivery device coupled to the expandable member, the energy delivery device configured to penetrate tissue and to controllably produce lesions of a sufficient size, number and configuration in an interior of the sphincter so as to create a selectable tightening of the sphincter; and

a flexible coupling member coupled to the expandable member, the coupling member including at least one lumen and configured to be maneuverable in a body lumen.

2 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a configuration of the energy delivery device includes a plurality of energy delivery members distributed on a surface of the expandable member, the apparatus further comprising:

at least one aperture disposed on one of the expandable member or the flexible coupling member, the at least one aperture configured to direct a cooling fluid to cool the energy delivery device.

3 (Original). The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the plurality of energy delivery members are radially distributed along a surface of the energy delivery device expandable member.

4 (Original). The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the plurality of energy delivery members are longitudinally distributed along a surface of the expandable member.

5 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device covers a portion of the surface of the expandable member.

6 (Original). The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the energy delivery device covers substantially all of an exterior surface of the expandable member.

7 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the expandable member is sized to be positionable in a sphincter and to allow the energy delivery device to contact a portion of the inner surface of a sphincter.

8 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the expandable member is sized to be positionable in a sphincter and to allow the energy delivery device to contact all of an inner surface of the sphincter.

9 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, where the energy delivery device is sized to be positionable in the sphincter and non-permanently dilate the sphincter from a contracted state; and wherein the sphincter returns to a pretreatment contracted state upon a removal of the expandable member from the sphincter.

10 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to form lesions in a muscle tissue underlying a sphincter mucosal layer.

11 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the deployed state is sized and applies sufficient force to the sphincter to dilate the sphincter between 5 and 40 mm and the energy delivery device is configured to dilate one of a lower esophageal sphincter or an adjoining tissue.

12 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create the lesions at a fixed depth from a mucosal surface layer of the sphincter of no more than 4 mms.

13 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create the lesions and minimizes injury to a mucosal and a submucosal layer of the sphincter.

14 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create the lesions and reduce a frequency of sphincter relaxation.

15 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create the lesions and reduce a duration of sphincter relaxation.

16 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create the lesions and reduce a frequency of reflux of stomach contents into an esophagus.

17 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create the lesions and reduce a frequency of a symptom of reflux of stomach contents into an esophagus.

18 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create the lesions and reduce an incidence of a sequela of reflux of stomach contents into an esophagus.

19 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is positioned on an exterior surface of the expandable member.

20 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is positioned on an interior surface of the expandable member.

21 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
a lumen positioned in an interior of the expandable member.

22 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the expandable member is expandable.

23 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the expandable member is a balloon.

24 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the expandable member is made of an expandable material.

25 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the expandable member is made of a porous material.

26 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
an electrolytic solution housed in an expanded expandable member.

27 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to deliver energy to promote a fibroblast cell infiltration at a site of the lesions.

28 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to deliver energy to promote a fibroblast growth at a site of the lesions.

29 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to deliver energy that promotes a myofibroblast cell infiltration at a site of the lesions.

30 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create a tightening of a lower esophageal sphincter without permanently damaging anatomical structures near the lower esophageal sphincter.

31 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create a tightening of the lower esophageal sphincter without permanently damaging an aorta positioned near the lower esophageal sphincter.

32 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create a tightening of the lower esophageal sphincter without permanently damaging a vagus nerve positioned near the lower esophageal sphincter.

33 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create a tightening of the lower esophageal sphincter without permanently damaging an esophageal plexus of nerves and veins positioned near the lower esophageal sphincter.

34 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create a tightening of the lower esophageal sphincter while preserving a blood supply to the lower esophageal sphincter.

35 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is an RF electrode.

36 (Original). The apparatus of claim 35, further comprising:
an RF energy source coupled to the RF electrode.

37 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is a microwave antenna.

38 (Original). The apparatus of claim 37, further comprising:
a microwave energy source coupled to the microwave antenna.

39 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is a waveguide.

40 (Original). The apparatus of claim 39, further comprising:
a light source coupled to the waveguide.

41 (Original). The apparatus of claim 40, wherein the light source is a laser.

42 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is an acoustical transducer.

43 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is a resistive heating device.

44 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
a visualization device coupled to the expandable member.

45 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
an extension member coupled to the expandable member.

46 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 45, wherein a proximal portion of the extension member is maneuverable by a medical practitioner.

47 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the energy delivery device is a plurality of RF electrodes.

48 (Original). The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the plurality of electrodes is a flexible circuit.

49 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
a mechanical expansion device coupled to the expandable member.

50 (Currently amended). An apparatus comprising:
an expandable member sized to be positionable in a lower esophageal sphincter and non-permanently dilate the lower esophageal sphincter from a contracted state, the expandable member having a deployed state and a nondeployed state, the deployed state sized for applying sufficient force to the sphincter to dilate the sphincter between 5 and 40 mm;

an energy delivery device coupled to the expandable member, the energy delivery device configured to penetrate tissue and to controllably produce lesions of a sufficient size, number and configuration in an interior of the lower esophageal sphincter to create a tightening of the lower esophageal sphincter;

a flexible coupling member coupled to the expandable member, the coupling member including at least one lumen and configured to be maneuverable in a body lumen; and,

wherein the lower esophageal sphincter returns to a contracted state upon a removal of the expandable member from the sphincter.

51 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to controllably produce lesions in an interior of the lower esophageal sphincter without creating a permanent impairment of the lower esophageal sphincter's ability to achieve a physiologically normal state of closure.

52 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is positioned on an exterior surface of the expandable member.

53 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is positioned on an interior surface of the expandable member.

54 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, further comprising:
a lumen positioned in an interior of the expandable member.

55 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the expandable member is expandable.

56 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the expandable member is a balloon.

57 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the expandable member is made of an expandable material.

58 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the expandable member is made of a porous material.

59 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 57, further comprising:
an electrolytic solution housed in an expanded expandable member.

60 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to deliver energy to the interior of the lower esophageal sphincter and create a fibroblast proliferation in the interior of the lower esophageal sphincter.

61 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to deliver energy to the interior of the lower esophageal sphincter and create a myofibroblast proliferation in the lower esophageal sphincter.

62 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create a tightening of the lower esophageal sphincter without permanently disrupting an aorta positioned near the lower esophageal sphincter.

63 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create a tightening of the lower esophageal sphincter without permanently damaging a vagus nerve positioned near the lower esophageal sphincter.

64 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create a tightening of the lower esophageal sphincter without permanently damaging an esophageal plexus of nerves and veins positioned near the lower esophageal sphincter.

65 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create a tightening of the lower esophageal sphincter while preserving a blood supply to the lower esophageal sphincter.

66 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is configured to create a tightening of the lower esophageal sphincter while creating submucosal lesions in the lower esophageal sphincter.

67 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is an RF electrode.

68 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 67, further comprising:
an RF energy source coupled to the RF electrode.

69 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is a microwave antenna.

70 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 69, further comprising:
a microwave energy source coupled to the microwave antenna.

71 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is a waveguide.

72 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 71, further comprising:
a light source coupled to the waveguide.

73 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 72, wherein the light source is a laser.

74 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is an acoustical transducer.

75 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 74, further comprising:
an acoustical energy source coupled to the acoustical transducer.

76 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is a resistive heating device.

77 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, further comprising:
a visualization device coupled to the expandable member.

78 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, further comprising:
an extension member coupled to the expandable member.

79 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 78, wherein a proximal portion of the extension member is maneuverable by a medical practitioner.

80 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the energy delivery device is a plurality of RF electrodes.

81 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 80, wherein the plurality of electrodes is a flexible circuit.

82 (Previously amended). The apparatus of claim 50, further comprising:
a mechanical expansion device coupled to the expandable member.

83-110 (Canceled).